

Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire-safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Sioux City Community School District received six Harkin grants totaling \$2,225,000 which it used to help modernize and make safety improvements throughout the district. The district received a 2000 grant for \$500,000 to help with a science classroom addition to East Middle School and a 2002 grant for \$1 million to install a new HVAC system which improved efficiency and indoor air quality at North High School. The district received four fire-safety grants totaling \$725,000 for fire alarms, emergency lighting, and other repairs in several schools throughout the district. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Sioux City Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Doug Batcheller, vice president John Meyers, James Daane, Greg Grupp, Walt Johnson, Nancy Mounts and Jackie Warnstadt and former board members Anne James, Flora Lee, John Mayne, Judy Peterson, Bob Scott, Valorie Kruse, Ron Jorgensen, and Barbara Benson. I would like to recognize superintendent Dr. Paul Gausman, former superintendent Larry D. Williams, director of operation and maintenance Mel McKern and supervisor for environmental systems Ralph Guenther.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends ex-

actly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Sioux City Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

#### TITONKA CONSOLIDATED COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Titonka Consolidated Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts, everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Titonka Consolidated Community School District received a 2005 Harkin grant totaling \$500,000 which it used to help build a new middle school and an addition at the elementary school. These schools are modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of schools that every child in America deserves. The district also received a fire safety grant totaling \$25,000 which it used to update sprinkler systems in the district.

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intendent Ron Sadler, Allen Boyken of Titonka Savings Bank, Jeff Carlton of Boyken Insurance, and the staff of Holland Contracting and Allers Associates Architects. Two members of the local community who were also instrumental in the project were Rhonda Sexton and Kathy Studer.

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#### TRIBUTE TO ROSE LARSON

● Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I wish today to recognize Rose Larson of Rapid City, SD. This summer, Rose retired from Federal service after a career spanning over 21 years.

Rose worked as an office manager in the Rapid City district office for Senator Tom Daschle for approximately 18 years and joined my district office staff in March 2005. Over her years of service, she provided consistent and commendable service to both myself and Senator Daschle. Her expertise with the various office technologies often kept the offices up and running efficiently. She was also able to effectively serve as a front line of communication for the general public when they contacted my office with comments on issues of importance.

Over 11 years ago, Rose was diagnosed with breast cancer. She fought cancer with a steadfast passion and commitment to beat the disease. Her success has served as inspiration to others who have battled and are currently battling cancer. She has worked tirelessly to educate friends, family, and the general public on cancer prevention, treatment, and how to fight the disease. She has worked with the American Cancer Society on Relay for Life events in western South Dakota and helped develop teams to raise money to fight cancer. Rose is a beacon of hope and help to many South Dakotans fighting cancer.

I want to congratulate Rose Larson for her many years of public service. Often she worked behind the scenes with little or no credit, but her dedicated service and knowledge of her duties was instrumental in the successful operation of the congressional offices she worked in.

I want to wish Rose all the best in her retirement. I want to thank her for her great work ethic, her professionalism but most of all, her friendship.●

#### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE STRANDELL

● Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I wish today to recognize and commend George Strandell of South Dakota for his nearly 40 years of service to Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. George is retiring after serving the past 8 years as general manager and chief executive officer of Golden West.

George worked for 19 years as a primary engineering consultant for the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative before being hired as the company's outside plant engineer. He served in that capacity for 4 years before serving 8 years as district manager and then 8 years as general manager of Golden West.

Throughout his career, George had dedicated himself to building effective relationships and partnerships on behalf of Golden West and the independent telecommunications industry. He is well-respected throughout South Dakota, the region and Nation as an effective communicator, an administrator willing to tackle and resolve personnel and industry challenges and issues. He is able to effectively communicate to elected leaders and officials on issues affecting Golden West customers, employees, and the independent industry.

Throughout his career, he has always worked hard to put the customer first. He has helped expand and enhance Golden West's role in the industry, among allies and associates, but also improved the company's ability to serve rural communities and customers and the overall general public.

George provided steadfast oversight to the South Dakota Network, which was formed by a number of South Dakota independent telecommunications firms to offer customers more choice in long distance service. George spent considerable time and effort working with other managers to ensure the network's success to move voice, data, and video over 20,000 miles of fiber optics throughout the region. Access lines have increased under George from 31,000 in 2000 to 43,000 in 2008, as well as Internet access increasing from 5,000 to 23,000 in the same period.

On a national level, George has been a stalwart advocate in promoting and assisting the independent industry. He has served on numerous boards and committees that have advanced the promotion and understanding of the issues affecting the independent tele-

communications firms and their customers.

Over the years, I have relied on George's guidance and understanding of the many issues affecting the telecommunications industry. I have appreciated his insight and input and I want to wish him all the best in this well-deserved retirement. I know that whatever his pursuits in retirement, he will approach them with the same level-headed, calm, and committed approach that earned him deep respect over his accomplished career with Golden West.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

##### ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 11:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills and joint resolution:

S. 496. An act to reauthorize and improve the program authorized by the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965.

S. 2482. An act to repeal the provision to title 46, United States Code, requiring a license for employment in the business of salvaging on the coast of Florida.

S. 3560. An act to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide additional funds for the qualifying individual (QI) program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2638. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3068. An act to prohibit the award of contracts to provide guard services under the contract security guard program of the Federal Protective Service to a business concern that is owned, controlled, or operated by an individual who has been convicted of a felony.

H.R. 5001. An act to authorize the Administrator of General Services to provide for the redevelopment of the Old Post Office Building located in the District of Columbia.

H.J. Res. 62. Joint resolution to honor the achievements and contributions of Native Americans to the United States, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills and joint resolution were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

At 11:11 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 440. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate:

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 906. An act to prohibit the sale, distribution, transfer, and export of elemental mercury, and for other purposes.

S. 1738. An act to require the Department of Justice to develop and implement a National Strategy Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction, to improve the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, to increase resources for regional computer forensic labs, and to make other improvements to increase the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute child predators.

S. 2816. An act to provide for the appointment of the Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department of Homeland Security by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

S. 2840. An act to establish a liaison with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to expedite naturalization applications filed by members of the Armed Forces and to establish a deadline for processing such applications.

S. 3325. An act to enhance remedies for violations of intellectual property laws, and for other purposes.

S. 3569. An act to make improvements in the operation and administration of the Federal courts, and for other purposes.

S. 3597. An act to provide that funds allocated for community food projects for fiscal year 2008 shall remain available until September 30, 2009.

S. 3605. An act to extend the pilot program for volunteer groups to obtain criminal history background checks.

S. 3606. An act to extend the special immigrant nonminister religious worker program and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1777) to amend the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 to make permanent the favorable treatment of need-based educational aid under the antitrust laws.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 5057) to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 5571) to extend for 5 years the program relating to waiver of the foreign country residence requirement with respect to international medical graduates, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 6460) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for the remediation of sediment contamination in areas of concern, and for other purposes.